

Bensalem African Methodist Episcopal Church  
(Little Jerusalem) (Little Bethel)  
1200 Bridgewater Road  
Bridgewater  
Bucks County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1721

HABS  
PA  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

ARCHITECTURAL DATA FORM

STATE Pennsylvania	COUNTY Bucks	TOWN OR VICINITY Bridgewater
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) Bensalem African Methodist Episcopal Church		HABS NO. PA-1721
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE Little Jerusalem, Little Bethel		
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) 1200 Bridgewater Road U.T.M. coordinates: 18.506480.4438560		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) Between 1832 (deed date) and 1850 (based on architectural detail)	ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE) None of record	
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) The Bensalem A.M.E. Church is said to be one of the oldest Black churches in America, having been organized in 1820. The church was founded by the Reverend James Miller under the supervision of Richard Allen who founded African Methodism. The church building, the congregation's first and only structure is a good example of a small church of the		
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE) early nineteenth century.		
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) Masonry foundation, wood frame		
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE) See photocopies of plans in field records		
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE Heavy frame walls covered with shiplap siding. Some of siding is beaded. Unusual cornice with ovolo detail. Original iron shutter hardware on window jambs and sills.		
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED) Random width floor boards, only 4-6 feet long; waist level wainscote with chair rails and no baseboards; ovolo molding on window and door frames; pulpit and altar rails are of early molding patterns and are assembled with joinery		
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES Renovations c. 1860 and c. 1890. Gothic window on front elevation was probably added during one of these renovations.		
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE Foundations, some of sill plate, siding and some interior plaster is very deteriorated, as are most of the windows. Building is being used by an active congregation.		
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE Non-archival photocopies and 35 mm negatives of plans, elevations, sections, and molding details have been deposited in the field records for this structure.		
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDING LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.) National Register of Historic Places nomination		
COMPILER, AFFILIATION Abraham B. Eastwood, Jr., Architect		DATE April 1982.